

CAPSULE SUMMARY

BA-0376

J. Underwood House

15010 York Road

Sparks, Baltimore County

ca. 1810

Private

The J. Underwood House was constructed circa 1810 as part of the grist and sawmill complex established by Matthews in the early 19th century north of Philopolis and west of Sparks. The building is representative of vernacular stone construction throughout Baltimore County. The village of Philopolis Post Office, was already beginning to thrive by the mid-19th century. Although the community continued to develop through the early 20th century, its growth slowed. By 1915, the village's name had fallen out of general use. Philopolis has become engulfed by the neighboring community of Sparks. As early as 1850, the village of Sparks and the road that connected it to Philopolis, were non-existent. The land that later became the community, lying east of the Gunpowder Falls, was traversed only by a few farms. By 1877, Sparks Road had been constructed from York Road in Philopolis to its terminus at Carroll Road. The village formed around the Sparks station along the Northern Central Railroad.

The J. Underwood House originated as a two-and-a-half-story, five-bay-wide dwelling of solid random rubble stone construction with two interior gable end random rubble stone chimneys. Circa 1820, a two-and-a-half-story, two-bay-wide addition was constructed on the side of the main block, which fronts east on the west side of York Road. At that time, a one-and-a-half-story ell of solid random rubble stone construction was added to the back of the main block near its junction with the addition. This ell joined the circa 1810 house with a circa 1800 one-story kitchen that sits to the west. An interior end chimney of random rubble stone construction rises from the end of this kitchen. From the center of the ell projects a fourth random rubble stone chimney. One interior chimney of concrete block marks the rear elevation of the wing addition. The circa 1810 façade features a central entry with a circa 1990 single-leaf door with transom flanked by four ten-light double-leaf doors. Five 6/6 vinyl windows pierce the second story of the original block. These ten openings have square-edged wood surrounds. The 1820 addition is pierced by two 6/6 windows with molded wood surrounds on each of the two stories. The building now features a continual side gable roof clad in standing seam metal and a one-story, seven-bay-wide porch with a shed roof supported by turned wood posts. Five dependencies, only one of which is historic, are associated with the property. The circa 1810 ice house is a one-story solid random rubble stone building that is banked into the hillside with stairs that descend from the arched entry.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-0376

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic J. Underwood House (preferred)

other Matthews Miller's House

2. Location

street and number 15010 York Road not for publication

city, town Sparks vicinity

county Baltimore County

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Michael K. and Alex L. Flanagan

street and number 15010 York Road telephone Not Available

city, town Sparks state MD zip code 12571

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse liber 12571 folio 326

city, town Towson tax map 34 tax parcel 161 tax ID number 0804076530

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

1

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-0376

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Constructed circa 1810, the vernacular J. Underwood House originated as a two-and-a-half-story, five-bay-wide dwelling of solid random rubble stone construction with two interior gable end random rubble stone chimneys. Circa 1820, a two-and-a-half-story, two-bay-wide addition was constructed on the side of the main block, which fronts east on the west side of York Road. At that time, a one-and-a-half-story ell of solid random rubble stone construction was added to the back of the main block near its junction with the addition. This ell joined the circa 1810 house with a circa 1800 one-story kitchen that sits to the west. An interior end chimney of random rubble stone construction rises from the end of this kitchen. From the center of the ell projects a fourth random rubble stone chimney. One interior chimney of concrete block marks the rear elevation of the wing addition. The circa 1810 façade features a central entry with a circa 1990 single-leaf door with transom flanked by four ten-light double-leaf doors. Five 6/6 vinyl windows pierce the second story of the original block. These ten openings have square-edged wood surrounds. The 1820 addition is pierced by two 6/6 windows with molded wood surrounds on each of the two stories. The building now features a continual side gable roof clad in standing seam metal and a one-story, seven-bay-wide porch with a shed roof supported by turned wood posts.

Five dependencies, only one of which is historic, are associated with the property. The circa 1810 ice house is a one-story solid random rubble stone building that is banked into the hillside with stairs that descend from the arched entry that is missing its door.

The circa 1980 barn is a wood frame building with a side gable roof clad in standing seam metal. The building features an addition with an asphalt-shingled shed roof.

The circa 1990 shed is a one-story, one-bay-square wood frame building clad in pressed vertical board siding with a front gable roof clad in asphalt shingles and a poured concrete foundation.

A second shed, which also dates to circa 1990, features a concrete block foundation, wood frame structural system clad in pressed vertical board, and a gambrel roof clad in asphalt shingles.

The circa 1990 garage is two stories tall and three bays wide with a side gable roof clad in standing seam metal with a solid random rubble stone veneer below a board-and-batten-clad second story. Three gabled dormers project from the front of the roof.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-0376

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates	1810 ca.-present	Architect/Builder	Unknown
Construction dates	1810 ca., 1820 ca.		

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The J. Underwood House was constructed circa 1810 as part of the grist and sawmill complex established by Matthews in the early 19th century north of Philopolis and west of Sparks. The building is representative of vernacular stone construction throughout Baltimore County. The village of Philopolis Post Office, was already beginning to thrive by the mid-19th century.¹ Although the community continued to develop through the early 20th century, its growth slowed. By 1915, the village's name had fallen out of general use.² Philopolis has become engulfed by the neighboring community of Sparks. As early as 1850, the village of Sparks and the road that connected it to Philopolis, were non-existent. The land that later became the community, lying east of the Gunpowder Falls, was traversed only by a few farms.³ By 1877, Sparks Road had been constructed from York Road in Philopolis to its terminus at Carroll Road. The village formed around the Sparks station along the Northern Central Railroad.⁴

Vernacular buildings tend to have little to no stylistic detailing and are typically constructed by local builders with locally available tools and materials. Vernacular architecture accounts for the majority of the built environment and reflects the traditions of society, rather than the whims of the architect.⁵ Throughout Baltimore County, there are a number of vernacular stone houses from this period. Stone was readily available in the county, with both marble and granite quarries located throughout the region. Commonly, these random rubble stone dwellings are two stories in height, single-pile with side gable roofs. This continuity of form is a result of folk architecture and the reliance on constructing forms that had been built by the previous generation.

¹ S. B. Clemens and C. E. Clemens, *From Marble Hill to Maryland Line: An Informal History of Northern Baltimore County* (np: C. E. Clemens and S. B. Clemens, 1976), p. 23.

² *Map of Baltimore County* (Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915).

³ J.C. Sidney, *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys* (Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850).

⁴ *Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland* (Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877).

⁵ Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, editors, *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. xv-xvi.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-0376

- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland.* Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.
Baltimore County Historic Inventory.
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.
Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.
Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.
Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property One Acre
Acreage of historical setting Unknown
Quadrangle name Hereford

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Since its construction circa 1810, the J. Underwood House has been associated with the 10.50 acres of land known as tax parcel 161 of map 34 located in the Baltimore County Tax Assessor's office.

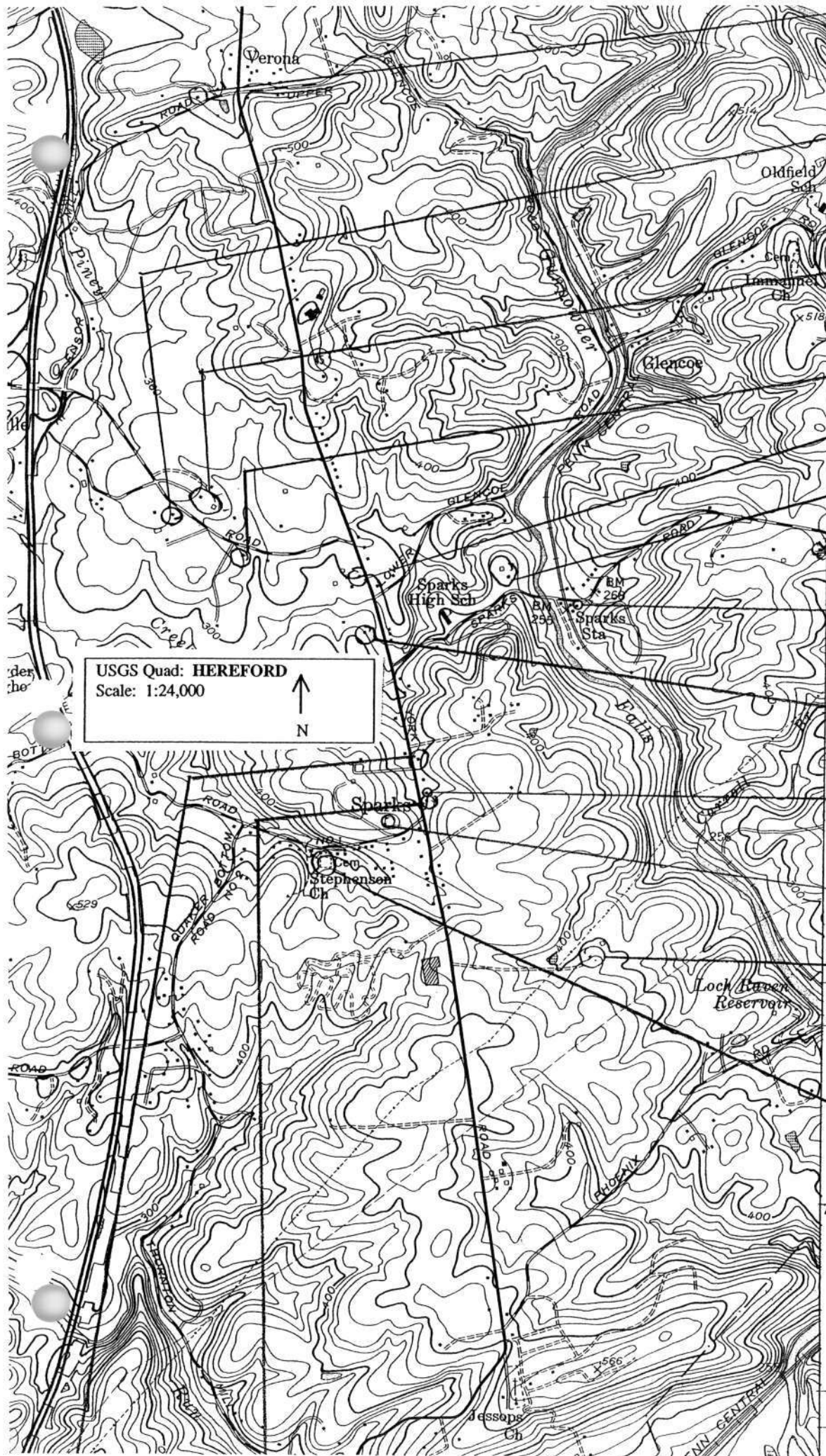
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	A. McDonald and A. Didden, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Incorporated	date	May 29, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



USGS Quad: HEREFORD
Scale: 1:24,000
N

- BA-0129 (PHOENIX) 5663 11 SE
- BA-0415 621 E BELFAST ROAD SPARKS, BALTIMORE COUNTY
- BA-0414 600 E BELFAST ROAD SPARKS BALTIMORE COUNTY
- BA-0374 707 E BELFAST ROAD SPARKS, BALTIMORE COUNTY
- BA-0375 15112 YORK ROAD SPARKS, BALTIMORE COUNTY
- BA-0409 1100 SPARKS ROAD SPARKS, BALTIMORE COUNTY
- BA-0612 32136
- BA-2462 1207 SPARKS ROAD
- BA-0376 15010 YORK ROAD SPARKS, BALTIMORE COUNTY
- BA-1716 14825 YORK ROAD
- BA-0428 7 STODDARD COURT
- BA 266 14611 YORK ROAD
- BA-0427 811 QUAKER BOTTOM ROAD SPARKS, BALTIMORE COUNTY

4375000m.N.

1.8 MI.



BA-0376

15010 YORK ROAD, SPARKS

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

4/2001

MD SHPO

E ELEVATION

1 of 3



BA-0376

15010 YORK ROAD, SPARKS
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

4/2001

MD SHPO

NW CORNER

2 of 3



BA-0376

15010 YORK ROAD, SPARKS
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

4/2001

MD&PO

S ELEVATION

3013

BA-376

MATTHEWS MILLER'S HOUSE - c. 1810 - West side of) 15010 York Road, between Sparks Road and Lower Glencoe Road, vicinity of Sparks. Large stone house in a hollow or meadow, seven bays wide, two stories, with thirteen rooms and five fireplaces. It was associated with the extinct Caro Mill or Matthews Mill (c. 1810) owned by Eli Matthews; the mill was on the same side of the road, and to the north, located just south of its power source, Piney Run. Shown as A. & H. Fahnestock's in 1915 atlas. Owner: John M. Dunham.